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Organización
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para la Educación,
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вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
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STRATEGY TO MAKE THE UNESCO INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION (IBE) UNESCO'S CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR CURRICULA

OUTLINE

Background: By 35 C/Resolution 14, the General Conference requested the Director-General to submit to it at its 36th session a consolidated version of the strategy to make the International Bureau of Education (IBE) UNESCO's centre of excellence in curriculum-related matters, following consultations with the Member States.

Purpose: The Director-General highlights the strategic actions that will contribute to achieving this goal, taking into account existing mission and strategic plans, and including reference to the organizational changes and resources required.

Decision required: An addendum to the present document will contain a draft resolution.

Introduction

The International Bureau of Education (IBE) is the oldest of the UNESCO Institutes, founded in 1925 and fully integrated into the Organization in 1969. It is UNESCO's institute specializing in the field of curriculum. Its global and comparative perspectives on curriculum, combined with its reach, networks and experience, make the IBE unique in the world among institutions in this field.

As recognized in recent resolution of the General Conference and decision of the IBE Council, UNESCO and its Member States and partners require the IBE to be a more forward-looking and cutting-edge Institute, referred to as a "Centre of Excellence" (CoE).

The *Evaluation of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education* conducted in 2005 found that the Institute had undergone a profound transformation since 1999 and had a number of recognized strengths. However, it also noted, *inter alia*, that the Institute operated with very limited human and financial resources, and that its reliance on extrabudgetary funding could unduly influence its priorities.¹

The purposes of this paper are to:

- provide a rationale for why the IBE should become UNESCO's CoE in curriculum;
- describe the essential characteristics and functions of such a CoE; and
- outline a strategy that will enable the IBE to be recognized as a leading global institution on curriculum and curriculum-related matters, and, in so doing, become a critical contributor to UNESCO's strategy for the achievement of its priorities in the field of education, most notably quality Education for All (EFA).

1. Rationale for change

Education is critical to achieving social cohesion, cultural respect, economic prosperity and personal fulfilment. A high-quality curriculum describes the teaching and learning necessary to achieve these outcomes and is the foundation for achieving key educational goals, particularly those of EFA. Such a curriculum promotes both inclusion and equity. It attracts and retains more learners, helps ensure that they learn what they need to and want to learn, and makes a successful transition to higher levels of education more possible.

However, curriculum itself is becoming more complex as educators seek to acknowledge new economic and social realities (such as rapidly emerging information and communication technologies and their impact on human behaviour, values and aspirations), to integrate new knowledge and skills into the curriculum, and to make students' learning both relevant to their current lives and essential for success in their future lives.

Within this context and with very limited resources, the IBE has for many years conducted a range of successful activities and provided many valued services. However, the services being requested from the Institute are increasing in volume, scope and complexity, and Member States look to UNESCO for leadership, advice and assistance on a number of persistent and challenging curriculum issues. The IBE needs to proactively anticipate, expand and enhance its work and reach in a number of areas if it is to successfully meet these demands and be truly recognized as a leading and respected CoE.

The choices for the IBE in this process are clear – it could either tailor its activities to its current resource levels by reducing the number of programmes and focusing on a few priorities, or it could retain (and, as appropriate, expand) its current programmes, enhancing their quality and scope by

¹ Refer to Laurue, P., Dani, S. and de Laat, B. (2006). *Evaluation of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education*, (IOS/EVS/PI/43).

attracting additional funds. There are significant risks inherent in the first of these choices, most notably that the IBE's involvement in the very complex and rapidly developing area of curriculum could be too limited to warrant broad recognition as a CoE and its overall positive impact on Member States would be diminished. To be perceived by stakeholders and other expert groups and institutions as a credible CoE, the IBE should therefore choose the second option, undertaking a broad range of functions (described in Guiding Principle B below) and providing a broader range of high-quality services to Member States and other clients.

Achieving recognition as a CoE will require organizational change based on a careful and comprehensive review of the IBE's existing programmes and priorities, internal management, governance, personnel and work practices. It will also require changes to its complex and uncertain funding arrangements,² which make long-term planning and the provision of sustainable support to Member States difficult. Significant additional, reliable and predictable funding is therefore indispensable to the enhancement of the IBE's programme outcomes and global profile, and its transition to the globally-recognized CoE that UNESCO expects and needs.

2. Guiding principles of this Strategy

This strategy is founded on the following principles which have guided both its approach and content:

A. As a CoE, the IBE must demonstrate specific core characteristics

It is clear that a CoE must both demonstrate certain core characteristics, including high standards in its level of staff expertise and service orientation, efficiency of operation and the quality of its outcomes, and be highly visible and widely recognized as knowledgeable, authoritative, visionary, proactive and functionally autonomous (in the UNESCO context) in the field of curriculum.

B. As a CoE, the IBE must perform specific core functions

A CoE for curriculum should perform a range of essential functions, including:

- generating and disseminating knowledge about curriculum products, processes, trends and emerging issues;
- collecting, analysing, synthesizing and disseminating curriculum-related data and resources;
- developing the capacity of, and providing technical assistance and other services to, UNESCO's Member States and regions;
- promoting and advocating evidence-based policy dialogue;
- facilitating South-South and North-South-South cooperation;
- partnering with academic and policy-oriented entities to support the conduct of original, action-oriented research and to analyse, synthesize and disseminate existing research findings; and
- promoting global policy dialogue among Ministers of Education and other relevant actors worldwide with regards to improving the quality of education for all.

² The IBE's funding sources currently comprise a mix of UNESCO recurrent allocation (e.g. regular budget), donor core support and extra-budgetary funding of different types.

C. As a CoE and within the framework of UNESCO’s Education Sector, the IBE must base its work on a broad conceptualization of the term “curriculum”

The activities of the IBE must respect the wide range of definitions of the term “curriculum”, reflecting particular contexts, interests and needs. It must focus on curriculum from early childhood through secondary education, including teacher training within a broader perspective of lifelong learning; recognize the coexistence of intended, implemented and attained curricula; and acknowledge and foster relationships among formal and non-formal education sectors, and between curriculum and other issues in education. It should acknowledge the global trend towards a focus on learners and learning outcomes, as well as research in areas such as the learning sciences.

D. The current programme areas of the IBE are appropriate for transition to a CoE

The IBE’s *Strategy 2008-2013*, which has been endorsed by the IBE Council, identifies three inter-related programme areas:

- capacity-development and technical assistance;
- knowledge production and management; and
- policy dialogue and the International Conference on Education.

The IBE can function successfully as a CoE within these existing programme areas. These areas should, however, be reviewed during the development of future strategies.

3. Current IBE programmes and possible additional services

As discussed above, if it is to be recognized as a CoE, the IBE will need to expand the range and reach of the services it provides to Member States, other stakeholders and potential clients in each programme area.

A. Capacity-development and technical assistance

To supplement current work in this programme, a range of additional services should be designed and promoted. These should include, in the area of capacity development: developing a framework of flexible and recognized training courses for various target groups, accredited by partner academic institutions or recognized by government agencies (e.g. accrediting bureaux); delivering courses and further developing related training materials; and actively supporting UNESCO’s Regional Bureau of Education in customizing curriculum-related activities and initiatives.

In the area of technical assistance, services should include: developing a clear set of criteria to guide the prioritization of requests for various levels and types of technical assistance; expanding in-country support for curriculum agencies and officials; and providing a professional assessment of existing curricula and processes based on contemporary standards and norms.

B. Knowledge production and management

While the Knowledge Production and Management programme is steadily expanding its range and reach, other services should be offered. These include: strengthening links with academic institutions to generate and disseminate research results with policy implications; strengthening the links and networks among and between national, regional, and international organizations, non-governmental organization (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector, so as to enrich available data and knowledge; enhancing the analytical and synthesizing functions through a clearinghouse mechanism;

and developing a more comprehensive, accessible and open-source collection of and linkage to good practices from around the world.

C. **Policy dialogue and the International Conference on Education (ICE)**

The services which the IBE should offer, in addition to the organization of the ICE sessions, include: facilitating policy dialogue among a broader range of stakeholders from inside and outside educational systems; encouraging and contributing to policy dialogue among basic and secondary education and teacher education policy-makers and specialists; promoting and advocating for more support to curriculum reform and innovation at high-level Ministry of Education meetings through issue- or theme-specific conferences – virtual or real – at the regional and national levels; and developing a series of short policy briefs highlighting the major policy challenges facing curriculum designers and developers.

4. **Goals and strategies for becoming a Centre of Excellence**

Goal A: Develop programmes and services that are relevant and responsive to the needs of Member States, innovative and effective in nature and, above all, of high quality.

Strategy A1:

The IBE should clearly define its priorities based on its comparative advantages: what it must do as its core functions and services, what it should do given additional resources and what it should “refer” to other institutions better equipped for the task.

Recommended actions – short term:³

A1.1 Develop a plan of action (including any transition arrangements) for the implementation of this strategy that identifies priority objectives, specifies expected outcomes and sets clear timelines, and a financial plan that details budget requirements.

A1.2 Revise the IBE's statements of its mission, purpose and broad objectives to ensure that they reflect the intent of this strategy.

A1.3 Conduct a review of all current activities within each programme area to determine the extent to which each activity is consistent with the IBE's revised statements of mission, purpose and broad objectives.

A1.4 Develop a document outlining the IBE's programmes and actions prioritized by region/type of context, time, level/type of education and curriculum issue, including options with regard to the available and expected resources.

A1.5 Initiate a continuing process to monitor and provide feedback regarding the implementation of this Strategy to the IBE Council.

Recommended actions – medium-long term:⁴

A1.6 Prepare a new *IBE Strategy 2013-2018* that reflects this strategy including defining the IBE's approach and listing its priorities as a CoE in curriculum, issues to be addressed and regions in which effort is to be focused.

A1.7 Undertake regular internal and external assessment of the implementation of this Strategy to make the IBE a CoE in curriculum and curriculum-related matters.

³ Short term in this context means within 12 months of this strategy being adopted.

⁴ Medium-Long term in this context means within 1-5 years of this strategy being adopted.

Strategy A2:

The IBE should improve and diversify evidence-based mechanisms for the assessment of global, regional and national needs and priorities in regard to curriculum-related services.

Recommended actions – short term:

A2.1 Develop a methodology to systematically and regularly assess trends in global, regional and national needs and priorities.

A2.2 As part of this methodology, develop a process of consultation, preferably using video-conferencing or similar real-time technology, with relevant partners.

Recommended actions – medium-long term:

A2.3 Regularly apply this methodology in consultation with national and regional clients and partners, and compile a report summarizing the responses.

A2.4 Revise programme priorities based on the report above.

Strategy A3:

The IBE should further develop a results-based focus for its work, looking beyond inputs and immediate outputs to longer-term outcomes and impact.

Recommended actions – short term:

A3.1 Strengthen and improve the results-based planning cycle, including monitoring and evaluation in terms of the anticipated outcomes and benchmarks, as well as the reporting mechanisms.

A3.2 Ensure that national, regional and global needs and priorities are taken into account in the planning and programming cycle.

Recommended actions – medium-long term:

A3.3 Analyse factors contributing to sustainable change/improvement to inform ongoing planning.

A3.4 Produce an annual report for each programme area which includes every significant activity undertaken and an assessment of its success in terms of the anticipated outcomes. As appropriate, conduct follow-up evaluations of long-term impact by assessing sustainable change/improvement attributable to the activities.

A3.5 Incorporate the requirements of the above actions into the work performance agreements of all staff.

Strategy A4:

The IBE should both make results from relevant research easily available to its partners and define its own forward-looking, cross-national and demand-driven research agenda.

Recommended actions – short term:

A4.1 Based on the IBE's field work and consultations with its partners, compile a set of important, relevant and current research topics and questions.

A4.2 Develop formal research agreements and partnerships with selected universities and other research organizations facilitating data collection, participating in and disseminating research analyses.

Recommended actions – medium-long term:

A4.3 Disseminate relevant and pertinent research findings of partner universities and other research institutions through the IBE website.

A4.4 Conduct analyses of the IBE's own databases and publish regular updates on how education systems are addressing high-priority curriculum issues (e.g. global situation analysis of the state of curriculum design and development).

Goal B: Develop efficient mechanisms to implement programmes and deliver services appropriate to a CoE

Strategy B1:

The IBE should build on its extensive set of networks to support the delivery of its programmes and diversify further the already wide range of partners needed to assist it in its work, with a particular focus on promoting South-South and North-South-South collaboration.

Recommended actions – short term:

B1.1 Strengthen and expand IBE networks to include:

- curriculum experts, professional associations, and other centres of excellence which could assist the IBE to carry out its tasks at regional and national level;
- other relevant United Nations agencies and international non-government organizations;
- key figures from outside education concerned with the quality of education (e.g. leaders of civil society, politicians/parliamentarians, the mass media, the private/business sector, and, increasingly, alumni of IBE courses); and
- supporters and “friends of the IBE” who can provide the Institute with information, contacts and support, and high-level “champions” or “goodwill ambassadors” who would be willing to speak on its behalf.

Recommended actions – medium-long term:

B1.2 Based on the members of these networks, more systematically organize the IBE's partner/network databases, particularly its roster of institutions, technical specialists and pioneers in the field who can be called upon to help the IBE deliver its increasing range of services.

Strategy B2:

The IBE should further expand its collaboration with other UNESCO institutes (both category 1 and 2) and UNESCO field offices, especially the Regional Bureau for Education, in order to (among other purposes) promote the inclusion of curriculum issues in the programmes of United Nations Country Teams.

Recommended actions – short term:

- B2.1** Organize a series of meetings between the IBE, the other category 1 and category 2 institutes, and Directors of Headquarters Divisions to discuss the implementation of this strategy.
- B2.2** Strengthen linkages with all UNESCO field offices and National Commissions as active analysts of local curriculum needs and priorities, identifiers and convenors of potential IBE partners and advocates for/transmitters of IBE messages into the discourse of United Nations Country Teams and United Nations Member State planning processes.

Recommended Actions – medium-long term:

- B2.3** Strengthen collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Bureaux of Education, to develop them as strong regional partners with the IBE and co-implementers of its programmatic areas of work.

Strategy B3:

The IBE should continue to explore innovative methods for sustainable capacity-development for the full range of actors involved in curriculum.

Recommended actions – short term:

- B3.1** Develop a systematic framework of flexible training courses and related certificates and accreditation arrangements.
- B3.2** Improve and refine existing training tools to fit the framework created in B3.1.

Recommended actions – medium-long term:

- B3.3** Within the framework mentioned in B3.1:
- create new training tools to meet emerging demands and trends;
 - develop intensive, longer-term training programmes in cooperation with universities, leading to academic accreditation; and
 - develop or adapt e-learning and online and distance learning programmes and fora.

Strategy B4:

The IBE should develop systematic, comprehensive and innovative communication, advocacy, marketing and fund-raising strategies.

Recommended actions – short term:

- B4.1** Develop a comprehensive communication strategy that identifies key messages, target groups and media, as well as mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness of the strategy.
- B4.2** Develop a comprehensive advocacy and marketing strategy that promotes the IBE's services and 'brand', identifies key products and potential clients or beneficiaries, and describes strategies for reaching new and potential clients.
- B4.3** Develop a fund-raising strategy that pursues new and potential governmental and private sources of funds and that sets realistic targets (in terms of the number of donor countries and amount of funds) and timelines.

Recommended actions – medium-long term:

B4.4 Implement and monitor the strategies described in B4.1-3 above.

Strategy B5:

The IBE should promote policy dialogue, with particular emphasis on the International Conference of Education (ICE) as a major policy dialogue forum of Ministers of Education.

Recommended Actions – short term:

B5.1 Strengthen the IBE's follow-up activities deriving from the last ICE on inclusive education, in particular to ensure that policies and practices of inclusive education, broadly defined, are being developed by Member States.

Recommended actions – medium-long term:

B5.2 In collaboration with the IBE Council, the Education Sector at Headquarters and other major partners, develop specific plans in regard to the frequency, format, and content of future ICE sessions, and explore ways to enhance the visibility of the ICE, as well as to move towards more interactive dialogue and more focused conclusions and recommendations at each ICE.

B5.3 Consistent with Strategy B4 above, and in close collaboration with the Education Sector at Headquarters, ensure appropriate funding for the ICE in ways and at levels that do not compromise the IBE in carrying out its core functions or delivering other core services.

B5.4 Explore a broad range of policy dialogue opportunities involving stakeholders from inside and outside educational systems, and advocate curriculum reform and innovation at high-level Ministry of Education meetings at regional and national level.

Goal C: Strengthen management and governance structures so that they are logical, efficient, effective and appropriate to a CoE.

Strategy C1:

The IBE should review and, if appropriate, redesign its organizational structure to more logically reflect and efficiently manage its functions and to support the delivery of its services.

Recommended actions – short term:

C1.1 Comprehensively review the current IBE organizational and staffing structure, and define an ideal organigram for the IBE (also in conjunction with recommended action A1.1 above) that clearly reflects the proposed additional functions and services of a CoE, and make strategic decisions concerning which areas must receive priority attention.

C1.2 Create a mechanism and strengthen the human resources needed for developing and implementing a communication, advocacy, marketing and fund-raising strategy.

Recommended actions – medium-long term:

C1.3 Enhance coordination among the priority programme areas of the IBE and its "additional programmes" (HIV/AIDS, Basic Education in Africa Programme [BEAP], etc.) and special projects.

C1.4 Strengthen the IBE’s functions of research planning and coordination and of monitoring and evaluation, and ensure they are placed more logically into the new IBE organizational structure.

Strategy C2:

The IBE should seek to create additional posts and further develop the expertise of existing staff in order to meet the increased demand and implement the expanded programme of a CoE.

Recommended actions – short term:

C2.1 Identify the essential core competencies and staff, as well as redesign current staff profiles (e.g. skill sets and expertise) in order to fill in the new organizational structure mentioned above (C1.1).

C2.2 Reassess, further enhance and more appropriately utilize the skills, expertise and experience of staff.

Recommended actions – medium-long term:

C2.3 Recruit additional staff as required (and if funds allow) to meet the wide range of skills, knowledge and experience needed for the IBE to perform as a CoE.

C2.4 Explore the possibility of using more flexible contractual arrangements than currently exist in order to recruit and keep needed expertise.

Strategy C3:

In order to ensure efficient and effective guidance and oversight of the IBE as a CoE, the IBE Council should initiate a process to review the current governance structure and, if appropriate, to develop, propose and seek support for a new structure. Any resulting structure should both maintain the principle of geographic representation and ensure high-level educational expertise in the decision-making process regarding IBE’s programmes and priorities.

Recommended actions – short term:

C3.1 In close collaboration with UNESCO Headquarters, examine the size, composition and functions of the IBE Council, including the possibility of creating an advisory mechanism that would provide expert advice to the Council and professional support to the IBE by focusing on planning and programme development, and the “anticipatory” function so critical to a CoE.

C3.2 Based on the results of this examination, propose a range of options for a new model of governance for discussion by the IBE Council and endorsement of a preferred model to the General Conference.

Recommended actions – medium-long term:

C3.3 Strengthen its ability to provide programmatic guidance, resource mobilization, strategic decision-making and oversight to support the work of IBE as a CoE.

Conclusion

To develop a Centre of Excellence in curriculum – an increasingly complex field – is difficult but essential. This is especially true when both demands on IBE are increasing and pressure on

governments to achieve and even transcend the Education for All targets and the education-related Millennium Development Goals is becoming more prevalent.

Successful implementation of this Strategy will depend on two critical factors: the support of all stakeholders; and significant additional, reliable and predictable funding. Only with real stakeholder commitment and additional resources will the programme outcomes and global profile of IBE be enhanced and the CoE in curriculum that UNESCO expects and needs become a reality.



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STRATEGY TO MAKE THE UNESCO INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION (IBE) UNESCO'S CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN CURRICULUM¹

ADDENDUM

¹ In the English version of the document 36 C/18, the title should have been "Strategy to make the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) UNESCO's Centre of Excellence in Curriculum".

Introduction

1. By 35 C/Resolution 14, the General Conference requested the Director-General to submit to it at its 36th session a consolidated version of the strategy to make the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) UNESCO's centre of excellence in curriculum. The IBE Council at its 59th session (27-29 January 2010) established a Working Group (WG), composed of representatives of 12 Member States of the Council (two per electoral group), a representative of UNESCO's Education Sector and the Director of IBE to formulate the final draft of the Strategy. The IBE Council also approved the terms of reference of the WG and elected as its chairperson, Ambassador Rodolphe Imhoof, the Permanent Delegate of Switzerland to UNESCO.

2. The WG has been supported in its task by an advisory team, composed of three experts from different regions, mandated after an open selection process and financed by voluntary contributions. The WG met three times: in January 2010 to have an open discussion on the basic issues to be dealt with; in May 2010 to discuss the strategy's draft outline and structure with key stakeholders and advisors; and in September 2010 to discuss and finalize the full draft strategy, as well as to give an account of the progress made to the members of the Steering Committee of the IBE Council.

3. In view of receiving contributions from bilateral partners' and stakeholders' to the strategy, a questionnaire on the work of the IBE and their expectations of its activities was circulated early on in the process. Inputs from the questionnaire and the WG have been incorporated into the strategy.

4. A wider consultation process beyond members of the IBE Council has also taken place, in which members of the WG have shared and disseminated the draft strategy among UNESCO Member States through their respective regional groups. Support to the strategy was expressed throughout the consultations and the comments received have been incorporated into the draft strategy, resulting in a consensual document of the WG.

5. The IBE Council unanimously approved the strategy at its 60th session in January 2011.

6. The main purpose of the Strategy is to enable the IBE to be recognized as the leading global institution on curriculum, and, in doing so, become a key contributor to the achievement of quality education for all.

7. During the preparation of this Strategy, it became apparent that all Category 1 institutes are facing challenges to varying degrees, in programme coordination, administration, staffing and financing. It would therefore be advisable to undertake an internal evaluation to address these challenges and to ensure that all Education Category 1 institutes contribute to UNESCO's education programme in an integrated way, while maintaining their functional autonomy.

Proposed draft decision

8. The General Conference may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The General Conference,

1. Recalling 33 C/Resolution 90, 34 C/Resolution 4 and 35 C/Resolution 14,
2. Takes note of document 36 C/18 and its addendum, in which the Director-General proposes a consolidated version of the Strategy to make the UNESCO International Bureau of Education UNESCO's centre of excellence in curriculum;
3. Takes note of the fact that additional, reliable and predictable funding will be required for the implementation of the Strategy;

4. Acknowledging the contributions of the Working Group entrusted with the finalization of the Strategy,
5. Taking note of the consultation process with Member States, the bilateral partners and stakeholders which helped to finalize this document,
6. Reaffirming the priority placed on education within UNESCO's mandate and recognizing the engagement of the Director-General to enhance UNESCO's role in promoting quality education for all,
7. Approves the proposed Strategy aimed at making the UNESCO International Bureau of Education UNESCO's centre of excellence in curriculum;
8. Requests the IBE Director, in close cooperation with the IBE Council and with the active support of UNESCO Headquarters, field offices and other stakeholders, to take the necessary steps for the implementation of the strategy;
9. Further requests the IBE Director, in cooperation with the IBE Council through its President, to seek additional extrabudgetary funds in order to ensure the full implementation of the main programme activities proposed in the Strategy;
10. Calls upon Member States to support the attainment of the goals of the Strategy, including through reliable and predictable extrabudgetary support.
11. Authorizes the Executive Board to take appropriate measures for the convening of the 49th session of the International Conference on Education, based on the proposal by the IBE Council at its 61st session.